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AUTHOR	Patterson, James T.
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ABSTRACT

This book presents a narrative version of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, which struck down state-sponsored racial segregation in America's schools. It analyzes the origins and consequences of that landmark case, illuminating the legal, political, and social implications of this decision. The book weaves many controversial issues into the story, presenting the views and experiences of such people as Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP attorney who won the case; Chief Justice Earl Warren, new to the Court, who steered a deeply fractured court to its landmark verdict; Kenneth and Mamie Clark, African American psychologists whose research helped persuade the Court that segregation damaged the psyche of black students; and Governor George Wallace of Alabama, who was an ardent segregationist. After a preface, "Contesting the Color Line," the 10 chapters include: (1) "Race and the Schools Before Brown"; (2) "The Grass Roots and Struggling Lawyers"; (3) "The Court Decides"; (4) "Crossroads, 1954-55"; (5) "Southern Whites Fight Back"; (6) "Striving for Racial Balance in the 1960s"; (7) "The Burger Court Surprises"; (8) "Stalemates"; (9) "Resegregation"; and (10) "Legacies and Lessons." Two appendixes present key Supreme Court decisions discussed in the book and a list of tables and figures. (SM)

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